



**Montgomery County, MD
Commission on People with Disabilities
Meeting Summary Minutes
December 14th, 2011**

Welcome and Approval of October and November Meeting Summary Minutes:

Charlie Crawford, Vice-Chair, convened the meeting. Seth Morgan, Commissioner, made a motion to approve the October and November Meeting Summary Minutes as written. Jennifer Wolfsheimer, Commissioner, seconded the motion. The October and November Meeting Summary Minutes were unanimously approved.

“Respect the Space” Update ~ Lucille Baur, Office of Public Information and Staff Liaison to the Department of Police

On November 21st, County Executive Isiah Leggett held a [press conference at Westfield Shopping Center to announce the “Respect the Space” campaign](#), which seeks to prevent the abuse of parking spaces reserved for people with disabilities and to prevent the illegal use of accessible placards and plates. The press conference was covered by News Channels 4, 5 and 9, and radio station WAMU. An article was featured in the Gazette as well as on Patch.com, Disability.gov, and ConnectedCommunities.us. The Montgomery County Cable (MCC) program “County Report This Week” included information regarding the press conference. Seth Morgan, Commissioner, and Connie Latham, Special Assistant to the County Executive, were guests on the MCC Program “Make A Difference”, where they discussed the “Respect the Space” campaign. They also spoke about how to volunteer to become a member of a Board, Committee or Commission (BCC) and the roles BCCs serve in the County.

The public service announcement (PSA) for the campaign has been filmed and will air throughout the month of December on all cable stations. Campaign flyers will be posted at the six district police stations, 21 libraries, three senior centers, 19 recreation centers, and five regional service centers. This is the first wave of publicity. A training program is currently being developed for volunteers to review parking lots in the County for proper accessible parking signage.

This is the first year that officers will be checking accessible spaces at shopping center parking lots during their regular patrols. Vehicles will be cited if they do not have a disability parking tag or placard.

Review and Prioritization of Goals as Established at November Retreat and Discussion of Outcomes:

The Chair of each Workgroup was asked to briefly clarify the overall mission of the workgroup and note the goals that were developed during the November Retreat. Commissioners were then asked to choose which workgroup they would like to be a part of. Each workgroup then regrouped in a corner of the room to discuss outcomes.

1. Employment Workgroup: Mark Maxin, Chair; Charlie Crawford, Damian Gregory, Darlene Taper, Diana Stewart, Francesca Pelligrino, Francie Gilman, Kathy Bridgeman,, Kathy Kolan, Lu Merrick, Megan Larson, Susan Hartung, Ted Gutman, Trish Gallalee, Angela Washington, Betsy Luecking

The workgroup mission is to increase employment of people with disabilities by promoting opportunities for the employment, training, placement, retention and advancement of individuals with a broad range of disabilities within the County Government and its contractors. The workgroup outcomes will be:

- Bring the issue of Schedule A to the Charter Commission and strategizing for the meeting scheduled for January 11th. They would like to have people with disabilities, as well as a veteran with a disability, at the meeting to discuss the benefits of a hiring preference.
- If Schedule A is put on the ballot, the Commission will need to develop an outreach plan to educate residents on the benefits of instituting a hiring preference program.

Work on issues involving transitioning youth.

Schedule A Charter Amendment Update – December 13, 2011

The Charter Review Commission is interested in taking up the issue of a special hiring authority for people with disabilities on January 11, 2012. A few years ago, the previous Commission looked at this issue and decided to not make a recommendation to amend the Charter. At that time here were their objections:

Charter Review Commission's Objection #1:

"Reluctance to support such a broad change in Charter language without knowing how the program would be implemented."

Charter Review Commission's Objection #2:

"Concern that carving out a special hiring authority for just one class of chronically unemployed or underemployed individuals would overlook and possibly be discriminatory to other chronically unemployed or underemployed groups that are equally worthy of special consideration."

Charter Review Commission's Objective #3:

"A desire to allow time for the County to implement and evaluate recent changes in County job opportunities, policies and practices intended to promote and facilitate the hiring of persons with disabilities, including the recently enacted hiring preference for persons with disabilities and new County training programs for employers potentially making it unnecessary to authorize a fundamental change to the merit system through a Charter Amendment."

The current Commission is interested in receiving a briefing on this issue. They are trying to figure out whether to study the issue and they believe that a briefing will help them understand the issue better and make an informed decision about whether to study the issue. A few years ago, Mark Maxin, who was then-Chair of the Commission, provided a very helpful overview of the issues and the federal government schedule A program. The Commission will be making a presentation to the Charter Review Commission meeting at their January meeting to discuss the issues surrounding County hiring of people with disabilities and a special hiring authority.

Option Not Being Pursued: Attempt at Petition:

A person is required to follow the specific procedures described at this website to amend the county charter by petition; <http://www.elections.state.md.us/petitions/index.html>. Private citizens can design the specific language for the ballot if this a petition process and the Board of Elections would receive a copy in advance to ascertain if it meets the legal requirements of a petition drive. If this is an internal (county) change generated by a Department, it is advised to contact the county attorney liaison to start the process with in the county as ultimately the County Executive and Council must weigh in on such a proposal.

NY City has a program, consistent with civil service law (55-a) which permits municipalities to employ persons with disabilities in civil service position on a non-competitive basis without taking a written or oral examination. Individuals are; however, required to present their qualifications and be interviewed. Significantly, it allows a conversion existing position to a non-competitive class. Individuals, who qualify for 55-a, must be qualified to perform the duties of position. NYC uses two agencies to certify whether an individual is disabled under the provision of 55-a.

2. Housing Workgroup: Tim Markwood, Chair; Catherine Mello, Charlie Crawford, Daphne Pallozzi, Jeremy Buzzell, Jonathan Pfeffer, Marcie Povitsky, Stephen Riley, Susan Smith Trish Gallalee, Betsy Luecking

The workgroup mission is to promote policies and programs that provide access to housing for people with disabilities; develop, support and promote full inclusion of people with disabilities as they seek access to all housing opportunities in Montgomery County. The workgroup outcomes will be:

Housing Workgroup Goals – December 15, 2012

1. Meet with the new Executive Director of HOC to identify accessible housing goals.
2. Develop issues to present to HOC on improving access to housing for people with disabilities

3. Revise the housing pamphlet Property Manager and Landlord Guide for Renting to People with Disabilities to be sent out to landlords when they get licensed
4. Work with Hoc to implement housing stock for accessibility
5. Invite new Executive Director of Coalition for the Homeless to a commission meeting
6. Research how to be more involved in HUD CON plan
7. Tim Markwood and Jonathan Pfeffer to represent Commission at Design for Life Workgroup meetings.
8. Tim Markwood will continue to represent the Commission on the Adventist Archdiocese Housing Workgroup.

3. Transportation Workgroup: Chair; Charlie Crawford, Chair; Seth Morgan, Hilary Kaplan, Jennifer Wolfsheimer, Mark Loberg, Sean Blake, Trish Gallalee, Betsy Luecking

The workgroup mission is to promote all publicly funded transportation to be safe, accessible, affordable and reliable for persons with disabilities. The workgroup outcomes will be:

- Safety (lighting, signage, elevator safety and security, ridership).
- Flashing lights at intersections for emergency vehicles to notify drivers with hearing loss.

Safety

- Advance transportation safety through:
 - Promoting security in elevators that are in long hallways and dimly lit areas;
 - Raising awareness regarding the need for more signage and announcements pertaining to unexpected escalator outages to mitigate people with a disability reaching the escalator and being forced forward by crowd;
 - Education regarding the need for better lighting in Metro stations, so people with disabilities can safely navigate through the system;
 - Spearhead intersection safety for Deaf and hard-of-hearing drivers and pedestrians by promoting the adoption of a strobe light to alert of approaching emergency vehicles.

Accessibility (MetroAccess, etc.)

- As per ADA; a right for all. Interface with Council of Governments, New Freedom initiatives for monetary support for projects
- Seek statistics on numbers using/needing special accommodations from WMATA & Ride-On and consider performing survey of patrons.

Respect the Space

- Continue working with Montgomery County to further the Respect the Space Campaign.
 - Ensure that the Campaign includes WMATA parking lots, which may have inadequate accessible parking spaces.

Chair and Vice Chair Report: None.

Roundtable: None.

Community Speaks: None.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Next Full Commission Meeting: Wednesday, January 11th, 2012 – Executive Office Building, 101 Monroe Street, Lobby Auditorium, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 – 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday, January 18th, 2012 – 401 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, Maryland, 20850 – 1st Floor Tan Conference Room, 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

Submitted by: Carly Clem, Office Services Coordinator
Betsy Luecking, Disability Policy Specialist